are also being supported by the Central Government by way of providing funds for acquisition of trainer aircraft through Directorate General of Civil Aviation and Aero Club of India.

(b) At present there is no general shortage of pilots. However, there is a shortage of aircraft type endorsed pilots, particularly in the Commander category, which are met by the airlines by engaging foreign pilots. Operators are required to train type rated Indian pilots for phasing out Foreign pilots.

Loss due to fog

†720.SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the flights were badly affected due to fog and mist this year;

(b) if so, the details of cancelled and delayed flights;

(c) the total loss of revenue to Government due to this;

(d) the steps taken by Government to solve the problems of the passengers; and

(e) the steps being taken by Government to tackle the problem of fog and to prevent the loss of revenue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. During December, 2008 and January, 2009, 71 flights were cancelled, 752 flights were rescheduled and 145 flights were diverted due to fog.

(c) No such assessment is made.

(d) and (e) Pilots of various domestic Scheduled Airlines are trained for CAT-II/III operations during low visibility conditions as per the requirements laid down in Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) Section-7, Series 'X', Part-1. Although there is no mandatory requirement for Domestic Airlines to get their pilots trained to operate during low visibility conditions, these airlines are persuaded to train their pilots to operate in low visibility conditions. Only such pilots, who are CAT-II/III qualified, are approved as Instructor/Examiner so as to ensure, that more trained pilots are available for CAT-II/III operations during low visibility conditions to improve the operational efficiency. Further, flights schedules of Domestic Scheduled Operators to/from fog bound airports are approved on the basis of number of pilots trained by the operators for low visibility operations and the suitability of the planes for such operations.

Paucity of secondary airports

721. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has examined the recent study on Civil Aviation in India by an aerospace expert Hormoz P Mama, observing that India is not suitable for low cost airline model due to paucity of secondary airports;

(b) whether out of 127 airports under the operational control of Airports Authority of India (AAI) only 80 are operational;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) what are Government's plan to develop more secondary airports to sustain the growth of low-cost operators; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Airports Authority of India (AAI) manages 124 airports and civil enclaves and at 11 other airports (including 5 international airports), AAI provides CNS/ATM services. At present 98 airports are operational in the country.

(c) and (d) AAI has undertaken an ambitious programme to upgrade/modernise airport infrastructure at 48 smaller airports in the country. Besides, AAI proposes to upgrade some of its non-operational small airports subject to availability of land from the concerned State Governments free of cost and free from encumbrances, either through its own resources or in joint venture with the State Governments.

Service tax arrears of British Airways

722. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the British Airways has been permitted to accumulate Rs. 133 crore as service tax arrears for the period 2006-07; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

CAT-III-B trained pilots

723. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued instructions to airlines to train their pilots or equip their aircrafts to make use CAT-III- B for smooth movement during dense foggy weather;

(b) if so, how many pilots have been thus trained or aircrafts equipped during the 2006 and 2007; and

(c) what is the break - up of such trained pilots, airlines - wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) There is no mandatory requirement for Domestic Airlines to get their pilots trained to operate during low visibility conditions. These airlines are persuaded to train their pilots to operate in low visibility conditions.

(b) and (c) No specific aircraft was equipped specially for CAT IIIB operation in 2006 and 2007 but aircraft are imported with the capability of CAT-II/III A or B operation by airlines.